

Delaware roads need to improve

Editor:

With the recent opening of the next to last phase of the great "Delaware Route One Relief Route" project, the end is at long last in sight on that massive undertaking. As much as I hate to tell this to my friends in Delaware's Department of Transportation, more needs to be done. A major battle is now brewing between DelDOT officials on the one hand and landowners along the Route 1, U.S. 13 and U.S. 113 corridors over what is known as "corridor preservation."

DelDOT hopes to be able to keep entrances for new commercial and residential uses on these heavily-travelled transportation corridors under tight control to avoid having to control new highway access to the extent necessary to allow the ever-increasing volume of traffic to flow freely is like trying to close the barn door after the horse has got out.

I'm not suggesting that we should allow the kind of congestion that has developed between Five Points and Rehoboth Beach on Route 1 to become the standard in other fast-growing parts of Sussex County. I am suggesting that if we really want to move long-distance traffic through the area safely while allowing local traffic to patronize local businesses located along these existing roadways, the only way to do it is to build a new limited access north-south highway south from Dover Air Force Base to the Maryland State Line.

Although Sussex County is developing rapidly, there remain feasible north-south routes that can be planned without major disruptions. It may even be possible to accomplish the necessary task within the existing corridors through the use of new service roads, although this could well prove more expensive than building a new highway from scratch.

We'll still have the problem of how best to move motorists from a new north-south highway over to the beaches. I don't have the answer to that problem. But I do know that separating the through traffic from

the local traffic wherever possible is essential for reasons of public safety as well as economic development. When you've got long-distance travelers trying to get through a highway filled with shoppers, as we now have along the Five Points to Rehoboth stretch, or along municipal streets filled with pedestrians, as is the case in Dewey Beach, it is a public safety nightmare.

I would strongly urge the powers that be in the DelDOT and state planning circles to begin work on planning a new north-south route to serve Sussex County in the 21st century. Trying to cobble together a modern transportation corridor out of congested roadways through heavily developed areas is not the way to start the new millennium.

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